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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MINIMUM WAGE COMMISSION

OF

MASSACHUSETTS.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1917.



BOSTON:  
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,  
32 DERNE STREET.  
1918.



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**PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT  
APPROVED BY THE  
SUPERVISOR OF ADMINISTRATION.**

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**MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

---

EDWIN N. BARTLETT, *Chairman.*

MABEL GILLESPIE.

ARTHUR N. HOLCOMBE.

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ELLEN NATHALIE MATTHEWS, *Secretary.*





# **The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

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## **REPORT.**

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*To the Honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives in General Court assembled.*

The Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission herewith respectfully submits its fifth annual report, which contains an account of its proceedings and investigations during the year ending Dec. 31, 1917, together with recommendations for such additional legislation as the experience of the Commission has shown to be necessary. To it is appended the secretary's report, summarizing the activities of the Commission's field and office force during this period and giving the expenditures of the department for the fiscal year ending Nov. 30, 1917. A tabular summary of the recommendations made under the authority of the minimum wage law up to Jan. 1, 1918, is contained in the appendices.

### **CHANGE IN THE PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSION.**

In October, 1917, the second term of Commissioner Arthur N. Holcombe expired. Mr. Holcombe, one of the earliest advocates of minimum wage legislation in this country, and a member of the Commission from the time of its establishment, was obliged to decline reappointment on account of his absence in Washington in the service of the United States government for the duration of the war. Pending the appointment and confirmation of his successor, he has up to the close of the year continued to give a portion of his time to the work of the Commission.

## MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1917.

The year which has just come to a close has been one of unusual significance in the history of minimum wage legislation in this country. With the action of the Supreme Court of the United States in April, affirming the decision of the Oregon Supreme Court which sustained the constitutionality of a compulsory minimum wage law for women, the most serious impediment to the enforcement of similar legislation throughout the country has been removed. The effects of this decision have already been seen in the presentation for argument, after delays of from one to three years, of similar cases which were pending in the Superior Courts of Arkansas and Minnesota and the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. Decisions upholding the legislation were rendered by the Arkansas court on June 4, and by the Minnesota court on December 21, and action relative to the Massachusetts case,<sup>1</sup> which was argued on December 12, is expected in the near future.

Notwithstanding the setback to the extension of minimum wage legislation resulting from the delay in the action of the United States Supreme Court with regard to the constitutionality of the Oregon law, statutes providing for the establishment of minimum wages were enacted during the past year by the legislatures of two States, namely, Arizona and Colorado. In addition, an act was passed in North Dakota establishing a commission authorized to investigate wages and working conditions of women and minors and to recommend legislation for the improvement of such conditions. The Arizona law, approved on March 8, establishes a compulsory minimum wage of \$10 per week for all women employed in stores, offices, restaurants, hotels, laundries and manufacturing establishments. In Colorado a preliminary investigating commission was appointed in 1913, but its power expired two years later, and a bill which passed the legislature in 1914, creating a permanent commission with power to establish and enforce minimum wage standards, was

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<sup>1</sup> *Holcombe et al. v. Creamer et al.*

vetoed by the Governor and in consequence never became operative. The present law, which went into effect on July 20, 1917, gives to the State Industrial Commission, a body already charged with the administration of the laws relative to hours of labor and workmen's compensation, the power to establish compulsory minimum wages and "standards of conditions of labor and hours of employment" for women and minors employed in any occupation.

In States where minimum wage laws were already in force a number of new orders or recommendations have been put into effect during the past year. Among the most important of these rulings were those affecting women employed in canneries in Oregon, mercantile establishments and laundries in California and Kansas, and in the men's clothing and furnishing goods trades in Massachusetts. In addition to the establishment of orders concerning occupations hitherto unaffected, revised orders for minors and apprentices have been entered by the Industrial Welfare Commissions of Oregon and Washington. While there have been as yet no increases due to the recent rise in living costs in the minimum rates already operative, it is reported that a strong effort is now being made in Oregon and Washington to have existing minimum standards increased for all occupations.<sup>1</sup>

#### MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES, 1914-17.

An event of the past year of perhaps almost equal significance to the immediate future of minimum wage legislation as the upholding of the constitutionality of the Oregon law has been the passage, as a war measure, of the British act which provides for the establishment of minimum wages for farm laborers. The enactment of this and similar regulations in other European countries during the years 1914-17 not only gives evidence that the economic conditions result-

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<sup>1</sup> On Jan. 7, 1918, a proclamation was issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission of Washington, calling upon the employers in that State to grant a voluntary increase of wages to their employees "to cover this period of the greatly increased cost of living with which we are now burdened." Unless employers respond satisfactorily to this appeal the Commission states that it "will be compelled to take such other action within its power as may be necessary to secure the desired result." The complete text of this proclamation is reprinted in Appendix No. 2.

ing from the war have failed to bring about such increases in the prevailing rates of wages as to render minimum wage legislation unnecessary, but, on the contrary, shows that the need for governmental action has been increased in a large number of trades and occupations.

The minimum wage movement has indeed received a marked impetus in Europe since the outbreak of the war. Four countries in which no such legislation had previously been enacted — namely, France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland — have found it necessary to make provision for the regulation of wages by governmental action as a result of the inadequacy of earnings to meet the rising cost of living.<sup>1</sup> In Great Britain legal minimum rates have been put into effect, under the operation of the Trade Boards Act, in three new trades employing together some 135,000 workers.<sup>2</sup> In addition the sphere of government control over wages has been extended through the Munitions of War (Amendment) Act of 1916,<sup>3</sup> which authorized the Minister of Munitions to issue orders regulating wages in the many establishments

<sup>1</sup> For information regarding these regulations see United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Review, December, 1915, pp. 36-41, and September, 1916, p. 77 (relating to the minimum wage law for female home workers in the clothing industry in France); March, 1917, pp. 362-365 (regulations as to the wages of workers in munitions factories in France); and December, 1917, pp. 113, 114 (Determination of Wages by the State in Germany, Austria and Switzerland).

<sup>2</sup> These trades, which were specified under the Trade Boards Provisional Orders Confirmation Act of Aug. 15, 1913, are as follows: sugar confectionery and food preserving, employing about 80,000 workers; shirt-making, employing approximately 40,000 persons; tin box and hollow ware, employing together about 15,000 persons (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 167, p. 174). The minimum rates of wages fixed for these trades became operative in Great Britain on June 7, 1915; July 5, 1915; Nov. 29, 1915; and Jan. 1, 1916, respectively. (Women's Industrial News, London, January, 1916, charts facing pp. 6 and 8.)

<sup>3</sup> In a summary of the orders relative to women's wages issued by the Ministry of Munitions up to April, 1917, published in the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Review for August, 1917, it is estimated that through the government's efforts in regulating wages in controlled establishments, "approximately 380,000 out of 400,000 women have benefited by wages adequate to maintain them in health and efficiency, while to a very large proportion opportunity has been given to augment their earnings" (p. 119). The wages orders issued by the Ministry of Munitions up to April 1, 1917, apply to women and girls employed in government-controlled establishments engaged in the following trades: arms, ammunitions and ordnance; mechanical, electrical, telegraphic and marine engineering; makers of electric and telegraphic accessories; machine tool manufacture; shipbuilding and repairing; iron and steel works; tube works; lead and copper works; foundries; blast furnaces; wire and cable works; textile and printing machinery; motors and cycles; aircraft; constructional engineering; the manufacture of saws and files; cutlery; silver and electroplate; chemicals; asbestos; rubber; optical and scientific instruments; explosive and filling factories; mica; and wood-work for aircraft (p. 127). A minimum time wage of £1 (\$4.87) per week of forty-eight hours or less, with 6d. (12.2 cents) for each additional hour up to fifty-four, was established for women employed on men's work (p. 125). This rate was increased to 2s. (\$5.76) on April 16, 1917, because of the rising cost of living.

which are under government control, and more recently by the passage of the act mentioned above, providing for the establishment of an Agricultural Wages Board for the fixing of minimum rates for agricultural laborers.<sup>1</sup> Moreover as a result of the general rise in living costs, increases over pre-war rates have been granted both in Great Britain and in the Australian States for the benefit of the workers in a number of the trades for which legal minimum wages had already been established. In Great Britain all of the wages boards except those established for chain-making and embroidery, have made advances in the minimum rates originally fixed.<sup>2</sup> In New South Wales not only have increases in the wage rates established for individual trades been awarded by a number of wages boards, but two general increases in the basic living wage fixed in February, 1914, have been granted since that date by the Court of Industrial Arbitration.<sup>3</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MINIMUM WAGE COMMISSION, 1917.

During the year 1917 the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission has completed its reports on the wages of women in the men's clothing and furnishing trades and certain branches of the women's clothing industry not previously investigated, preliminary statements of which were contained in the last annual report, has established three wage boards to recommend minimum wage rates for women employed in these trades, and has approved the recommendations of the two boards which have already reported their findings to the Commission.

Inquiries into the wages of women employed in hotels and restaurants and in the making and trimming of millinery, begun in 1916, have also been completed. In addition, the Commission has made a comprehensive investigation of the wages and conditions of labor of women employed in the

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<sup>1</sup> Corn Production Act of Aug. 21, 1917. For analysis of the provisions of this act relating to the establishment of an Agricultural Wages Board, see United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Review for January, 1918, pp. 97-100.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, I. O., & Hobbs, M. A., *Economic Effects of the War upon Women and Children in Great Britain*, Oxford University Press, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Review, February, 1917, pp. 296-299.

cleaning and care of office buildings, and has commenced an investigation of the wages of women engaged in the manufacture and finishing of cotton textile goods. Public hearings have been held for proprietors of hotels and restaurants, millinery establishments and office buildings for the purpose of considering the advisability of establishing wage boards for the determination of minimum wages for women employed in these occupations, and the evidence presented at these hearings is now under consideration by the Commission.

Inspections have also been made of the pay-roll records of brush factories, retail stores, women's clothing factories and custom dressmaking and tailoring establishments, for the purpose of ascertaining whether employers were complying with the recommendations of the Commission relative to the payment of the women and girls in their employ.

#### THE WORK OF THE WAGE BOARDS ORGANIZED FOR THE CLOTHING AND FURNISHING TRADES, 1917.

At the close of the year 1916, as noted in its last report, the Commission had just completed a study of the wages paid to women in the men's clothing and furnishing trades<sup>1</sup> and in those branches of the women's clothing industry<sup>2</sup> not covered by the recommendations of the women's clothing wage board.<sup>3</sup>

A summary of the facts relating to the wages paid to women in these trades as found in the Commission's investigation was presented in the last annual report. The results of the investigation having shown that in each of the branches of these trades the wages paid to a substantial number of the females therein employed were "inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living and to maintain the

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<sup>1</sup> Minimum Wage Commission, Bulletin No. 13, *Wages of Women in Men's Clothing and Raincoat Factories in Massachusetts*, and Bulletin No. 15, *Wages of Women in Shirt, Workmen's Garment, and Furnishing Goods Factories in Massachusetts*.

<sup>2</sup> Minimum Wage Commission, Bulletin No. 14, *Wages of Women in Muslin Underwear, Petticoat, Apron, Kimono, Women's Neckwear and Children's Clothing Factories in Massachusetts*.

<sup>3</sup> The report of this board, which was established to recommend minimum wage rates for women and girls employed in the manufacture of women's cloaks, suits, skirts, dresses and waists, was approved by the Commission on Sept. 28, 1916, the recommended rates to become effective on the first day of the following February.

worker in health," the most immediate duty before the Commission at the beginning of the new year was the establishment of wage boards to recommend minimum wage rates for the women employees in these trades. In November, 1916, public hearings were held in Boston and Worcester for employers of women engaged in the manufacture of men's clothing and furnishing goods for the purpose of presenting to them the results of the Commission's investigations. No evidence was presented at either of these hearings to show that a wage board or boards should not be established. In response to an inquiry made by the Commission regarding the number of boards which should be organized for these trades, the manufacturers expressed themselves at the hearings and in subsequent correspondence as uniformly in favor of the establishment of two boards, one for the men's outer clothing and raincoat industry, the other for the shirt, overall and furnishing trades.

*The Men's Clothing and Raincoat Wage Board.*

The Commission proceeded first to organize a wage board for the men's clothing and raincoat trades, which held its first meeting on April 23. The board consisted of fifteen members, including six employers and six employees, four persons on each side representing the men's clothing trade and two the raincoat trade, and three disinterested persons representing the public. Prof. William Z. Ripley of Harvard University acted as chairman of the board, and the other representatives of the public were Miss Frances Van Baalen of Brookline and Mr. A. E. Pinanski of Boston. After eleven meetings the board submitted to the Commission a unanimous report recommending a minimum wage of \$9 for experienced workers and \$7 for apprentices.

The report of this board is of peculiar interest, since it was the first wage board established in this State to undertake its work under war conditions and to face the problem of adjusting a schedule of minimum wage rates to the rapid changes in the cost of living and in the profits of industry due to the war. In submitting its recommendations to the Commission, the board specifically stated that these recommendations



were based only upon costs and conditions then existing (June, 1917), and that these conditions were "so abnormal and so likely to be temporary that the recommendation of a \$9 minimum wage is made with the express understanding that the conclusions of the Board are but tentative, and that it should in all probability be revised by subsequent procedure, in order that hardship either to employers or employees shall not result."

In determining the needs of the employees, the first duty imposed by law upon a wage board, the following detailed budget was unanimously agreed upon by the members of this board as the lowest sum upon which a self-supporting woman in the men's clothing and raincoat industry in Massachusetts could maintain herself in decency and health: —

	Per Week.
Board and room, . . . . .	\$5 50
Clothing, . . . . .	1 90
Laundry, . . . . .	35
Car fare, . . . . .	40
Doctor and dentist, . . . . .	25
Church, . . . . .	10
Vacation, . . . . .	25
Education, . . . . .	15
Recreation, . . . . .	25
Savings and insurance, . . . . .	50
Organization dues, . . . . .	15
Incidentals, . . . . .	20
Total, . . . . .	<hr/> \$10 00

After determining the minimum cost of living, the next duty of the board was to consider the financial condition of the industry and the probable effect thereon of an increase to \$10 a week in the minimum wages paid. With regard to the method and result of its fulfilment of this duty the board reported as follows: —

Based upon the experience of preceding wage boards as to the futility of attempting a general investigation in detail concerning either financial condition or wage costs, no formal inquiry was attempted. Unwillingness of many employers to report such data,

and especially the uncertainty of war conditions, stood in the way of even a modest attempt along these lines. A preliminary survey [of the industry] as reported by the Minimum Wage Commission itself<sup>1</sup> and the report of a subcommittee of employers, members of this board, were relied upon in reaching the conclusion as to the applicability of this minimum wage of \$10 per week to the Massachusetts men's clothing and raincoat industry.

During the spring of 1917, the condition of business in these industries was, on the whole, favorable up to the middle of April when war was declared. Immediately thereafter the wholesale trade suffered from a large number of cancellations from retailers. These cancellations were due to the abnormal weather conditions during the spring, but more especially, after the declaration of war, to the widespread disinclination of young men to buy clothing until they knew whether or not they were going to be drafted. The result was to leave many retailers overstocked with clothing for men under the age of thirty, — one of the most profitable branches of the business. More or less unrest among employees throughout the country, and especially in Massachusetts, prevailed during the early part of 1917. In Boston a general reduction of two hours per week and an increase of 10 per cent. in wages for piece workers and 6 per cent. for week workers took place at that time. Not less unfavorable, so far as cost of operation and profits is concerned, than the foregoing conditions is the abnormal price of woolen goods and trimmings. They reached quotations in 1917 which exceeded all previous records. The result as reflected both in quality and selling price must inevitably be a substantially decreased volume of business. *In the light of all the foregoing circumstances, it was therefore the unanimous opinion of the board, employers and employees alike, that it would be unwise to impose so heavy a burden upon the industry as the budget determined upon would entail.*

Conditions apparently were not so unfavorable in the raincoat business, especially as regards the effect of army conditions. Whether the war would, or would not, prejudicially affect Massachusetts, depended largely upon the number of government contracts which might be locally awarded. At the time of this finding, however, conditions were so uncertain in this regard that it was thought best to include the raincoat industry along with the other in the abatement of the finding.

It was the opinion of the board that the foregoing conditions were so abnormal and so likely to be temporary that their wage determination must inevitably be revised in the near future. The way under the minimum wage law is, however, open for such revision whenever a sufficient interest in the subject develops on either side to cause the

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission, Bulletin No. 13, *Wages of Women in Men's Clothing and Raincoat Factories in Massachusetts.*

necessary steps to be taken. This finding of \$9 is made, therefore, *with the express understanding that its conclusions are but tentative, and that it should in all probability be revised by such subsequent procedure, in order that hardship either to employers or employees shall not result.*

The recommendations of the board were tentatively approved by the Commission in August, and after a public hearing held thereon for employers, at which no one appeared to present evidence to show that the minimum rates recommended were unreasonable, the Commission by unanimous vote approved the determinations of the board and entered the following decree, the provisions of which take effect on Jan. 1, 1918:—

1. No experienced female employee of ordinary ability shall be employed in the manufacture of men's and boys' outer garments (suits, coats, vests, trousers and overcoats) and men's, women's and children's raincoats in Massachusetts at a rate of wages less than \$9 a week.

2. No female employee of ordinary ability of eighteen years of age or over shall be deemed inexperienced who has been employed in the men's clothing and raincoat industry for one year or more.

3. A female employee shall be deemed to have been employed in the industry for a year if her absences from her place or places of employment during that period have not been of unreasonable duration.

4. The wages of learners and apprentices may be less than the minimum prescribed for experienced employees provided that no female employee of ordinary ability who, irrespective of age, has had at least three months' experience in the men's clothing and raincoat industry shall be employed at a rate of wages less than \$7 a week.

5. A female employee of less than ordinary ability may be paid less than the prescribed minimum wage, provided that the conditions of section 9, chapter 706, Acts of 1912, are complied with.

6. These recommendations shall take effect on Jan. 1, 1918, on which date all female employees of ordinary ability of eighteen years of age or over who have been employed in the industry for at least one year shall be deemed to have served their apprenticeship, and all others shall be deemed to have begun their apprenticeship, and to be entitled to such rates as are specified above.

*The Men's Furnishings Wage Board.*

As soon as the organization of the Men's Clothing and Raincoat Wage Board had been completed the Commission proceeded to the establishment of a second board to recommend minimum wage rates for women employed in the manufacture of men's and boys' shirts, overalls and other workmen's garments, men's neckwear and other furnishings, and men's, women's and children's garters and suspenders. Because of the length of the full title of this board, it was decided that for convenience it should be known as the Men's Furnishings Wage Board. In response to the notice given to employers and employees of the Commission's intention to establish this board, nominations were received for eleven persons to represent the employers and fifteen persons to represent the employees. Three of the nominations made by individual employers were withdrawn before the expiration of the ten-day period in which nominations are legally valid,<sup>1</sup> and the names of six persons unanimously selected by a group of twenty manufacturers representing all of the various trades affected were submitted to the Commission. These six and one other of those nominated were named by the Commission to serve as the employers' representatives, seven of the persons nominated by the employees were selected to represent the workers, and three disinterested persons were appointed by the Commission to represent the public, thus forming a board of seventeen members. The chairman was Judge Frederick Chamberlain of the Worcester County Probate Court, and the other members representing the public were Miss Alice H. Grady of the Massachusetts Savings Insurance League and Mr. Lawrence G. Brooks of Boston.

On October 4 the board completed its deliberations and made the following report and recommendations to the Commission: —

The Men's Furnishings Wage Board, so called, presents the following report as the result of its study and deliberations: —

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<sup>1</sup> St. 1912, c. 706, par. 4.

The board met on June 7 and organized, with Judge Chamberlain as chairman. Thereafter the board held eight meetings, the last one taking place on October 4. At these meetings evidence was presented upon which the board without dissent drafted a tentative itemized budget for the minimum amount necessary to cover the cost of living and maintenance in health of a self-supporting woman employed in the branches of the industry under investigation, as follows:—

	Per Week.
Room and board, . . . . .	\$6 00
Clothing, . . . . .	1 75
Laundry, . . . . .	30
Car fares, . . . . .	60
Doctor and dentist, . . . . .	20
Church, . . . . .	10
Newspapers and magazines, . . . . .	15
Vacation, . . . . .	35
Insurance, . . . . .	10
Savings, . . . . .	25
Organization dues, . . . . .	15
Incidentals and recreation, . . . . .	50
<b>Total, . . . . .</b>	<b>\$10 45</b>

Having thus secured a basis for discussion, the board then proceeded to determine whether or not \$10.45 was a suitable minimum wage for the several branches of the industry concerned, taking into consideration the cost of living of the employees and the expenses and profits of the employers. The latter were requested to present evidence on both points, but more especially with reference to the probable effect on profits of the establishment of a minimum wage of \$10.45. The employers, however, failed to present evidence of any kind, three of their number resigning prior to the sixth meeting, and two more prior to the seventh meeting.

At the seventh and eighth meetings of the board, attended by the seven employees and the three members representing the public, definite figures were discussed for a suitable minimum wage to be applied to the several branches of the industry. After deliberation the board voted unanimously as follows:—

1. The minimum wage to be paid to any female of ordinary ability, of eighteen years of age or over, who has been employed in the manufacture of men's neckwear more than fifty-two weeks, shall be \$9 per week.

2. The minimum wage to be paid to any female of ordinary ability, irrespective of age, who has been employed in the manufacture of men's neckwear more than twenty-six weeks and not more than fifty-two weeks, shall be \$8 per week.

3. The minimum wage to be paid to any female of ordinary ability,

irrespective of age, who has been employed in the manufacture of men's neckwear more than six weeks and not more than twenty-six weeks, shall be \$7 per week.

4. For the purpose of computing weeks of experience a week's work shall consist of not less than thirty-six hours.

5. The rates are for full-time work, by which is meant the full number of hours per week required of employees and permitted by the laws of the Commonwealth.

6. Where workers are paid by the piece, piece rates shall be such as to yield the minima hereinbefore set forth for a week of full-time work.

7. These rates shall be put in operation on or about Feb. 1, 1918.

There being no evidence before the board which would justify it in making different rates for the different branches of the industry, it then voted by successive votes, all unanimous, that the foregoing rates apply to all the other branches of the industry under investigation by the board.

At the outset of the hearings the point was raised by the employers that the board has been improperly constituted, in that the industry which it was authorized to investigate was in reality more than one "occupation." This point was referred to the Commission, which ruled that those branches of the clothing and furnishings industry under investigation constituted one occupation within the meaning of the law.

The employers at the sixth meeting raised the further point that the alleged resignation of three of their number made further action of the board illegal. This point also was referred to the Commission, which ruled that a quorum of a wage board amounting to not less than a majority of its total membership was competent to do business.

In view of the concurrence in this report of all the members representing the public, the Commission voted to approve provisionally the recommendations of the board, and after due notice to employers paying less than the proposed minimum wage gave a public hearing relative to the final approval of these recommendations. At this and at a subsequent conference held with employers no evidence was submitted which showed that the financial condition of any of the different branches of the industry was such as would prevent the payment of the minimum wage rates recommended. The Commission therefore gave final approval to the recommendations of the board and voted the following decree to become effective Feb. 1, 1918: —

1. No experienced female employee of ordinary ability shall be employed in the manufacture of men's or boys' shirts, overalls or other workingmen's garments, men's neckwear or other furnishings, or men's, women's or children's garters or suspenders in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at a rate of wages less than \$9 a week.

2. No female employee of ordinary ability shall be deemed inexperienced who has been employed in the manufacture of men's or boys' shirts, overalls or other workingmen's garments, men's neckwear or other furnishings, or men's, women's or children's garters or suspenders for more than fifty-two weeks of not less than thirty-six hours each.

3. The wages of learners and apprentices may be less than the minimum prescribed for experienced employees, provided:—

(a) That no female employee of ordinary ability who has been employed in the industry for more than twenty-six weeks of not less than thirty-six hours each shall be employed at a rate of wages less than \$8 a week.

(b) That no female employee of ordinary ability who has been employed in the industry for more than six weeks of not less than thirty-six hours each shall be employed at a rate of wages less than \$7 a week.

4. A female employee of less than ordinary ability may be paid less than the prescribed minimum wage, provided that the conditions of section 9, chapter 706, Acts of 1912, are complied with.

5. These recommendations shall take effect on Feb. 1, 1918, on which date all female employees of ordinary ability who have been employed in the industry for at least fifty-two weeks shall be deemed to have served their apprenticeship, and all others shall be deemed to have begun their apprenticeship, and to be entitled to such rates as are specified above.

#### *The Women's Muslin Underwear, etc., Wage Board.*

The recommendations of the Women's Clothing Wage Board, a summary of which was given in the Commission's last annual report, were concerned only with the determination of minimum wages for women and girls employed in the manufacture of women's outer garments (coats, suits, skirts, waists and dresses). After this board had been established, the Commission began an investigation of the remaining branches of the women's and children's garment trades, which included muslin underwear, aprons, kimonos, neckwear, children's dresses and rompers. As soon as the tabulation of the information secured in this investigation had been completed, the Commission held a hearing for employers for

the purpose of presenting to them the facts brought out by the inquiry and of giving them an opportunity to show cause, if any, why a wage board or boards should not be organized for these trades. As the employers who attended this hearing showed themselves ready to co-operate with the Commission in the establishment of minimum wage standards, a wage board of fifteen members, under the chairmanship of Mr. Harrison Lyman of Boston, was organized to recommend minimum wages for the women employed in these trades. The other members chosen to represent the public were Mr. Willis Rowell of Worcester and Mrs. Walter B. Cannon of Cambridge. The board held its first meeting on October 24 and is still in session.

#### INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION IN 1917.

##### *Summary of Results of Investigation into the Wages of Women employed in Restaurants and Hotels.*

During the summer and early winter of 1916 agents of the Commission visited 124 restaurants and 140 hotels located in 58 cities and towns throughout the State, including 4 restaurants and 37 hotels which were open only during the summer months. Wage records available for tabulation were secured for a total of 6,496 women, 2,981 of whom were employed in restaurants, 803 in summer hotels and 2,712 in hotels open throughout the year. Records for 65 restaurants and 51 hotels which were open throughout the year covered the actual wages received by all women employed therein during the year ending July 31, 1916. Because of the absence of adequate pay-roll records, information received from all the seasonal hotels and restaurants and a number of those open throughout the year covered only the rates of payment and actual wages paid to all the women therein employed during the week preceding the date of the investigation. Schedules requesting information regarding age, length of experience and living conditions were also filled out by a large number of the women workers themselves. For the purpose of securing additional information regarding the personal needs of workers, the adequacy of their earnings to



cover these needs and other matters pertinent to the wage situation, data regarding which could not be obtained from the pay-roll records or the schedules filled out by the women at their places of employment, agents of the Commission visited in their homes over 200 of the restaurant workers for whom wage data had been obtained.

The results of the investigation into the wages of restaurant workers showed that of those for whom the Commission secured a full year's pay-roll record 54.0 per cent. earned an average weekly wage of less than \$6 and 42.0 per cent. earned an annual wage of less than \$100 during the period of employment in the establishments investigated. Additional compensation in the form of one, two or three meals per working day, varying usually according to the number of hours of employment, were furnished free of charge to at least 88.8 per cent., and the privilege of purchasing meals at reduced rates was given to almost all of the remaining number for whom information was obtained. The largest single group (44.4 per cent.) of the restaurant employees were furnished three meals per working day in addition to a money wage. Of the 1,251 women who formed this group, practically all of whom were full-time workers, 49.2 per cent. received an average money wage of less than \$6 a week. Three-fourths (76.3 per cent.) of the number for whom information was obtained worked forty-two hours or more a week, or long enough to prevent the possibility of augmenting their earnings by any other paid employment. An unusually large proportion of restaurant workers as compared with women employed in other occupations (31.3 per cent.) roomed and boarded away from their families or other relatives, and nearly nine-tenths (88.1 per cent.) reported that they were dependent upon their own earnings for the necessities of life.

A summary of the information secured by the Commission relative to the money wage and other compensation received by restaurant workers is presented in the following table:—

*Average Weekly Earnings of Women employed in Restaurants.*

NUMBER AND PER CENT. OF WORKERS EARNING —																		
NUMBER OF MEALS RECEIVED PER DAY IN ADDI- TION TO WAGES.	UNDER \$3.		UNDER \$4.		UNDER \$5.		UNDER \$6.		UNDER \$7.		UNDER \$8.		UNDER \$9.		\$9 AND OVER.		TOTAL.	
	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.		
Three meals, . . . . .	88	.6	36	2.9	188	15.0	615	49.2	1,004	80.3	1,139	91.0	1,168	93.4	83	6.6	1,251	100
Two meals, . . . . .	111	1.6	51	7.4	146	21.1	316	45.7	454	65.7	527	76.3	562	81.3	129	18.7	691	100
One meal, . . . . .	93	19.8	267	56.8	366	77.9	421	89.6	445	94.7	459	97.7	466	99.1	4	.9	470	100
No meals, . . . . .	11	3.0	48	16.8	61	21.4	74	26.0	82	28.8	87	30.5	102	35.8	183	64.2	285	100
Number of meals variable or not specified, . . . . .	17	14.3	26	21.8	45	37.8	94	79.0	111	93.3	114	95.8	116	97.5	3	2.5	119	100
<b>Total,</b> . . . . .	<b>140</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>2,096</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>2,326</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>2,414</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>2,816</b>	<b>100</b>

The level of wages paid to hotel employees was found to be considerably lower than that paid to restaurant workers, 64.4 per cent. of the women employed in hotels open throughout the year, and 82.2 per cent. of those employed in seasonal hotels, as compared with only 15.9 per cent. of the restaurant employees, being paid at the rate of less than \$5 a week. This difference in wages is, however, practically equalized by the fact that almost all of the hotel workers received three meals a day, or 21 meals a week, in addition to a money wage. Moreover, 60.8 per cent. of those in all-year hotels and 96.9 of those in summer hotels were furnished with lodging in addition to their board. The following table summarizes the facts relative to the wages paid in hotels as found by the Commission's investigation: —

*Rates of Payment for Women employed in Hotels.*

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPENSATION RECEIVED IN ADDITION TO WAGES.	NUMBER AND PER CENT. OF WORKERS WITH WEEKLY RATES OF —																TOTAL.	
	UNDER \$3.		UNDER \$4.		UNDER \$5.		UNDER \$6.		UNDER \$7.		UNDER \$8.		UNDER \$9.		\$9 AND OVER.			
	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.
<i>Hotels open all the Year Round.</i>																		
Lodging provided: —																		
Three meals, . . . . .	—	—	422	28.0	1,048	72.1	1,265	87.1	1,315	90.5	1,338	92.1	1,365	93.9	88	6.1	1,453	100
No meals, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	18.2	2	18.2	2	18.2	11	100.0	—	—	11	100
Number of meals variable or not specified, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100.0	1	100
No lodging provided: —																		
Three meals, . . . . .	13	1.6	44	5.3	435	53.9	592	71.8	704	85.4	730	88.6	751	91.1	73	8.9	824	100
Two meals, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	19	100.0	19	100.0	19	100.0	19	100.0	19	100.0	—	—	19	100
One meal, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	33.3	3	100.0	3	100.0	—	—	3	100
No meals, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	45.8	23	47.9	28	58.3	39	81.3	9	18.7	48	100
Number of meals variable or not specified, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	30.8	38	73.1	42	80.8	47	90.4	5	9.6	52	100
<b>Total, . . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>.5</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>2,235</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>2,411</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Summer Hotels.</i>																		
Lodging provided: —																		
Three meals, . . . . .	2	.3	531	68.3	643	82.6	702	90.2	720	92.5	737	94.7	745	95.8	33	4.2	778	100
No lodging provided: —	—	—	13	52.0	17	68.0	24	96.0	25	100.0	25	100.0	25	100.0	—	—	25	100
Three meals, . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total, . . . . .</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>.2</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total of all workers, . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>.5</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>2,212</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>2,642</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>2,847</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>2,924</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>3,005</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>3,214</b>	<b>100</b>

*Summary of Results of Investigation into the Wages of Women employed in the Manufacture and Trimming of Millinery.*

This investigation was begun on Dec. 28, 1916, and completed on March 19, 1917, and the tabulation of the wage and other information obtained occupied the statistical force of the Commission during the spring and early summer months of 1917.

Owing to the lack of existing information relative to the extent and conditions of employment and the prevailing rates of wages paid to women in the different branches of the millinery trades, and to the difficulty of defining the nature and limitations of these trades, the Commission decided to include in its investigation examples of all the kinds of establishments which it might find to be concerned in the making and trimming of women and girls' hats and bonnets and other millinery supplies. The results of the Commission's inquiry showed that the production of millinery goods in this State was conducted in the four following principal types of establishments, each of which differed from the others in a more or less marked degree in its form of organization and the compensation and conditions of labor offered to its workers:—

1. *Hat factories*, in which straw, felt and velvet hats are made by machine processes under factory conditions;

2. *Flower and feather shops*, in which artificial flowers, feathers and other millinery ornaments are manufactured, chiefly by hand processes;

3. *Wholesale millinery shops*, in which hats of straw, silk, velvet or other materials are made up on wire or buckram frames, and "ready-to-wear" hats are trimmed for sale to retail dealers;

4. *Retail millinery shops, including millinery workrooms in department stores*, in which hats and bonnets are made up and trimmed as in the wholesale shops, but for sale direct to the individual customer.

Agents of the Commission visited in all 190 establishments engaged in one or another of these branches of the millinery trade. Pay-roll information for a fifty-two-week

period was secured from 8 hat factories, 2 establishments in which artificial flowers and feather supplies were manufactured, 10 shops which made up and trimmed millinery for the wholesale trade and manufactured hat frames, 22 retail millinery parlors and 6 millinery workrooms in department stores.

As will be seen from the following table, the results of the investigation showed a wide divergence in the wages which prevailed in the different trades. Practically all of the experienced workers in the hat factories were found to have an earning capacity well above the subsistence level. Of the total number of women employed, 63.3 per cent. earned an average weekly wage of \$9 or over, and 13.3 per cent. an average weekly wage of \$15 or over. On the other hand, the seasons in this trade are unusually short; only one-third (33.2 per cent.) of the workers had employment for as much as six months of the year, and three-fourths (76.1 per cent.) earned under \$350 for their entire year's work in the industry. Women employed in the manufacture of artificial flowers and feathers and ornaments were found to be the most poorly paid group, almost one-half (47.3 per cent.) of them receiving an average weekly wage of under \$5, and an equal proportion (49.5 per cent.) receiving less than \$100 as their total annual earnings. As had been anticipated because of the similarity of the occupation in the wholesale and retail shops, the level of wages in these two branches of the trade were almost identical, except that a larger proportion of both high and low paid workers were found in the retail shops. This was primarily due to the employment of a larger proportion of skilled trimmers and of apprentices in the latter group of establishments. The most serious evil in the wage situation in the retail millinery trade was found to be the low payment or non-payment of apprentices. Forty-three per cent. of these who were reported as receiving payment for their services earned an average weekly wage of less than \$3, and in a number of establishments apprentices were paid no wages at all, at best receiving only their car fares, and in some cases a small additional sum to cover the cost of lunches.

*Average Weekly Earnings of Women employed in the Making and Trimming of Millinery.*

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT.	NUMBER AND PER CENT. OF WORKERS EARNING —													
	Under \$5.	Under \$4.	Under \$3.	Under \$2.	Under \$1.	Under \$1.	Under \$2.	Under \$3.	Under \$4.	Under \$5.	Under \$6.	Under \$7.	Under \$8.	Under \$10.
HAT FACTORIES: —														
Number, . . . . .	4	20	50	111	191	271	344	431	527	606	682	756	813	125
Per cent., . . . . .	.5	2.1	5.3	11.8	20.4	28.9	36.7	45.9	56.2	64.6	72.7	80.6	86.7	13.3
FLOWER AND FEATHER FACTORIES: —														
Number, . . . . .	16	48	86	113	141	153	162	173	177	181	181	182	182	—
Per cent., . . . . .	8.8	26.4	47.3	62.1	77.5	84.1	89.0	95.1	97.3	99.5	99.5	100	100	—
WHOLESALE MILLINERY SHOPS: —														
Number, . . . . .	4	19	40	92	135	184	240	283	307	332	354	372	380	13
Per cent., . . . . .	1.0	4.8	10.2	23.4	34.4	46.8	61.1	72.0	78.1	84.5	90.1	94.6	96.7	3.3
RETAIL MILLINERY SHOPS: —														
Number, . . . . .	24	41	71	87	107	137	186	238	274	295	303	309	314	37
Per cent., . . . . .	6.8	11.7	20.2	24.8	30.5	39.0	55.8	67.8	78.1	84.0	86.3	88.0	89.5	10.5

*Summary of Results of Investigation into the Wages of Women employed as Cleaners in Office and Other Buildings.*

During the months of April and May, 1917, agents of the Commission obtained information for a total number of 201 office and bank buildings, colleges, apartment houses and other buildings in which cleaners were employed, for the purpose of studying the extent and conditions of the employment of women in this occupation. It was found that in 91 of the buildings, including a large majority of those located outside of Boston, no women at all were employed. Pay-roll records covering a fifty-two week period were obtained from 64 establishments for a total number of 1,249 women, and schedules filled out by the individual workers, giving information relative to their personal circumstances, were obtained from 678 of these women.

The results of the investigation showed that 89.1 per cent. of the women earned an average wage of less than \$8 a week, and 30.3 per cent. earned an average wage of less than \$6 a week. Although over half (54.8 per cent.) earned less than \$200 during their year's employment in the building investigated, only 11.3 per cent. of the total number for whom such information was obtained and approximately the same number (11.0 per cent.) of those whose annual earnings as office cleaners totaled less than \$200 added to this income by the proceeds of other gainful employment. The hours of labor were found to be relatively short in this occupation, the majority of workers being employed for less than forty hours a week. On the other hand, approximately nine-tenths of the women who clean office buildings are required to do their work between the hours of 9.30 at night and 9.30 in the morning. Although there is practically no seasonal fluctuation in this employment, only 34.0 per cent. of the total number for whom wage data were obtained had employment for eleven months of the year.





PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR PROPRIETORS OF RESTAURANTS,  
HOTELS, MILLINERY ESTABLISHMENTS AND OFFICE  
BUILDINGS.

While the information secured in these investigations appeared to confirm the Commission's opinion that the wages paid to a considerable number of the women employed in each of the above occupations were inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living and to maintain the worker in health, before determining upon the establishment of wage boards for any of these occupations the Commission held a series of hearings for the purpose of enabling employers to furnish any additional evidence they might desire to present with regard to the wage situation and to show cause, if any, why wage boards should not be organized in their trades.

At the hearings held for proprietors of hotels and restaurants evidence was presented with the intent of showing that since the period covered by the Commission's investigation the minimum rates paid to women in the former class of establishments had increased sufficiently to render the work of a wage board unnecessary. The Commission therefore postponed the formation of a board or boards for restaurants and hotels, pending an investigation of the present wage situation.

Employers of women building cleaners also claimed that the wages of women in their employ had increased considerably during the past year and in addition questioned the propriety of establishing a living wage standard for an occupation in which the prevailing hours of labor are so far below the legal maximum. Additional information relative to wages, hours, conditions of labor and the personal circumstances of women employed in this occupation is now being secured by agents of the Commission.

No new information was presented at the hearing held for employers of women engaged in the manufacture and trimming of millinery regarding the wages as found by the Commission in the lower paid branches of the trade — namely, the retail and wholesale shops and flower and feather

factories — and the formation of boards to recommend minimum wage rates for women employed in one or more of these branches of the trades was taken under advisement by the Commission.

#### THE ENFORCEMENT OF MINIMUM WAGE DETERMINATIONS.

##### *Brush Industry.*

In November and December, 1917, the Commission made its third reinspection since the operation of the decree of Aug. 15, 1914, of the pay-roll records of women employed in brush factories. It was found that women were employed in 23 such establishments as compared with 17 reported at the time of the last inspection in June and July, 1915. The total number of women employed in the industry in the State was 871, an increase of 79.6 per cent. over the number reported in 1915, and an increase of 67.2 per cent. over the number employed in 1913, previous to the establishment of a minimum wage in the industry.

Five establishments, employing together 14 women, were found to be failing to comply with the recommendations of the Commission, and 10 women in these establishments, forming about 1 per cent. of the total number in the industry, were receiving less than the recommended minimum wage rates.

As shown by the following tables, not only has there been a marked increase in the number of women employed in the industry since 1915, but also the rates of payment and actual earnings are now above the minimum standards set by the Commission in the decree of Aug. 15, 1914. The number of women receiving an average of \$9 or more increased from 19.4 per cent. in 1915 to 45.8 per cent. in 1917. The average per capita wage, however, increased only 13.2 per cent.

*Rates of Payment for Women employed in Brush Factories, 1913, 1915 and 1917.*

YEAR.	NUMBER AND PER CENT. OF WORKERS WITH WEEKLY RATES OF —														TOTAL.	
	UNDER \$4.		\$4 AND UNDER \$5.		\$5 AND UNDER \$6.		\$6 AND UNDER \$7.		\$7 AND UNDER \$8.		\$8 AND UNDER \$9.		\$9 AND OVER.		Num-ber.	Per Cent.
	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.		
1913.	1	.3	45	11.5	134	34.1	115.	29.1	57	14.5	19	4.9	22	5.6	393	100
1915.	-	-	-	-	29	10.5	18	6.6	10	3.6	137	68.0	31	11.3	275	100
1917.	1	.2	-	-	-	-	6	1.0	74	12.6	137	23.3	371	63.0	589	100

NOTE. — Of the total 521 persons whose records were studied weekly rates were not available for 128 (1913). Of the total 485 persons whose records were studied weekly rates were not available for 210 (1915). Of the total 871 persons whose records were studied weekly rates were not available for 283 (1917).

*Average Weekly Earnings of Women employed in Brush Factories, 1913, 1915 and 1917.*

YEAR.	NUMBER AND PER CENT. OF WORKERS EARNING —														TOTAL.	
	UNDER \$4.		\$4 AND UNDER \$5.		\$5 AND UNDER \$6.		\$6 AND UNDER \$7.		\$7 AND UNDER \$8.		\$8 AND UNDER \$9.		\$9 AND OVER.		Num-ber.	Per Cent.
	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.	Num-ber.	Per Cent.		
1913,	63	12.1	123	23.6	134	25.7	73	14.0	46	8.8	29	5.6	53	10.2	521	100
1915,	16	3.3	31	6.4	49	10.1	93	19.2	143	29.5	59	12.1	94	19.4	485	100
1917,	46	5.3	16	1.8	35	4.0	74	8.5	140	16.1	169	18.5	399	45.8	871	100

*Laundries.*

As noted in the Commission's last two annual reports, the enforcement of the laundry decree has been delayed by the refusal of employers to permit the agents of the Commission to examine their pay rolls pending a final court decision regarding the constitutionality of the Massachusetts minimum wage law. The arguments in this case were at length heard by the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth on Dec. 12, 1917, the Commission being represented by Messrs. Arthur D. Hill, John G. Palfrey and Howard W. Brown, designated as special counsel by the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached by the court during the coming year.

*Retail Stores.*

A second reinspection of the pay rolls of retail stores was also commenced by the Commission in November of this year. This inquiry has not as yet been completed, but information has already been obtained for 55 establishments, including almost all of the large department stores in the State. In each of these establishments the pay-roll records have been inspected and the name, occupation, age, length of experience and weekly payment of each female employee who received less than the weekly minimum wage established for experienced adult workers (\$8.50) have been recorded. In addition, a transcript of a complete pay-roll record for one week has been taken from a typical department store in each of the larger cities for the purpose of ascertaining any changes in the general level of wages paid to women in these establishments since the time of the last inspection in 1916.

According to the information thus far obtained there has been no tendency on the part of employers to cease to follow the recommendations of the Commission, generally accepted by the proprietors of retail stores throughout the State in January, 1916.<sup>1</sup> No general increase in wages

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission, Bulletin No. 12, Preliminary Report on the Effect of the Minimum Wage in Massachusetts Retail Stores.

above the established minimum, however, such as was found in the brush industry, has occurred in retail stores, even in cities where there is known to have been a marked increase in wages in other industries. A computation based upon the total number of women employed and the total amount paid in wages to these women by a representative Boston department store shows that the average per capita wage in that establishment has increased only 3.9 per cent. in the period between these dates.

### *Women's Clothing Industry.*

On Feb. 1, 1917, a decree went into effect establishing a minimum standard of wages for women and girls employed in the manufacture of women's cloaks, suits, skirts, dresses and waists.<sup>1</sup> Notice of the provisions of this decree was given to employers through the newspapers and by personal letters, and the proprietors of a number of concerns immediately informed the Commission by letter of their intention to follow its recommendations. Shortly after the decree went into effect the Commission commenced an inspection of the pay rolls of all concerns in the State known to be engaged in the manufacture of the articles of women's clothing specified in the decree, both for the wholesale and the custom trade. A transcript of the pay-roll record for the week of approximately the greatest employment during the spring busy season was secured from 400 establishments located in 13 cities and towns, including 134 clothing factories, 222 dressmaking establishments and 44 women's custom tailoring shops. The results of this investigation showed that the great majority of the establishments investigated in which women were found to be employed were paying their workers in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission. Complete compliance was found in almost all of the clothing factories and custom tailoring shops, but in only about half of the custom dressmaking establishments. The following table, presenting information

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission, Statement and Decree concerning the Wages of Women in Women's Clothing Factories in Massachusetts.

for 27 clothing factories for which comparative data were available, shows that since the time of the Commission's first investigation in 1915, the proportion of women in this industry receiving \$9 or over has increased from 42.5 per cent. to 73.2 per cent. in Boston, and from 10.9 per cent. to 57.0 per cent. in out of town concerns.

A second inspection of the pay rolls of this industry, which was commenced in November, 1917, has not yet been completed.





### THE OUTLOOK FOR 1918.

The Commission enters upon the fifth year of its activity with the prospect of an unusually heavy burden of duties to perform. The most immediate and obvious are those which complete work commenced in former years, such as the establishment of wage boards for all occupations in which the results of the investigations completed in 1917 show that a substantial number of women earned less than a living wage; the continuation of the work of the boards already in session; the completion of the inspection of pay rolls in retail stores and women's clothing establishments and of the comprehensive investigation into the wages of women employed in the manufacturing and finishing of cotton textile goods, begun last June; and the enforcement of the new wage rulings for the men's clothing and furnishing trades effective Jan. 1 and Feb. 1, 1918, respectively.

In addition and in some instances incidental to the continuation of these various lines of work to which the Commission is already pledged, a number of new problems directly relating to the wage situation have arisen as a result of war conditions. The general increase in the cost of food, clothing and other commodities since 1914, and the extent to which the wage level in different industries and occupations has kept up with the rise in prices, are matters to which the Commission has already been obliged to devote much study, both in connection with the work of the wage boards which have been organized during the past year, and with the question of the establishment of new wage boards now under consideration. In this country as in the countries of Europe the war has caused a widening disparity between the price of essential commodities and the purchasing power of the wages paid in a large number of the traditional woman-employing occupations. The Commission has estimated that the cost of living of a wage-earning woman in Massachusetts, based upon retail prices weighted according to the proportion which each item of expenditure forms of the total weekly budget, increased at

least 35 per cent. in the period between October, 1915, and October, 1917.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, inquiry has shown that except in a relatively small number of industries there has been no general increase in wages at all comparable with this rise in living costs. A second result of the war, one which may in time require the entrance of the Commission into new fields of activity, is the employment of women in occupations hitherto filled by men. It may therefore become the duty of this State to follow the war-time example of Europe and Australia, not only in increasing the minimum wage rates already established, but also in extending the scope of its wage regulations to trades and occupations which have never before come under the operation of the minimum wage law.

#### RECOMMENDED LEGISLATION.

The experience of the Commission in enforcing its determinations, particularly those relative to the wages of women employed in the retail stores and in the manufacture of women's clothing, has shown the necessity of legislation enabling the Commission to issue special licenses to learners and apprentices and also to women who because of age are unable to do the work of an experienced employee of ordinary ability.

The Commission renews the recommendations, contained in its last two annual reports, for legislation requiring employers to keep records of hours worked by women and minors, for legislation enabling the Commission to fill

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<sup>1</sup> The following method was used in arriving at this estimate: a comparison was made of the index numbers of retail prices of food published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for October, 1915, and October, 1917, which showed an increase of 53 per cent. The cost of an itemized annual clothing budget prepared by the members of the Retail Store Wage Board, which held its sessions in the year 1915, was brought up to date by obtaining at department stores the 1917 prices for each of the articles specified. This showed that there has been an increase of about 35 per cent. in the total clothing budget. The increase in the price of fuel and light, and in the various incidental expenses, — such as laundry supplies, stationery, expenditures for recreation and vacation, — was ascertained from the most recently published statistics, or through special inquiry by agents of the Commission in the retail market. The proportion which each of the items of expenditure formed of the total budget of the wage-earning woman was then fixed by securing an average of the budgets approved by all the wage boards which have up to the present date made recommendations to the Commission, and the increase in the total cost of living was estimated by weighting the increase in the cost of the various items by the proportion which each item formed of this representative budget.

vacancies on wage boards, and for legislation to insure proper publicity for its orders and recommendations. The experience of the last year has served only to emphasize the importance of the considerations upon which these recommendations were originally based.

The Commission also renews a previous recommendation that 500 additional copies be printed of its annual reports. The demand for these reports is large and is constantly growing, and the interests of the Commonwealth require that it be fully supplied.

#### APPROPRIATION.

The appropriation for the fiscal year ending Nov. 30, 1917, was \$18,000. The manner in which this money has been expended is shown in the financial statement appended to the secretary's report. Since the enactment of the minimum wage law in 1913, the machinery of its administration has of necessity grown steadily more complex, particularly with reference to the enforcement of the increasing number of decrees in operation each year. The annual appropriations granted for the performance of the Commission's statutory duties, on the other hand, not only have not been increased to keep up with this necessary growth of administrative needs, but have, in fact, been decreased since the initial appropriation granted the Commission for its first full year's work in 1914 (\$18,900). The need for a larger appropriation for the proper performance of the Commission's duties, which has been emphasized in each of the Commission's previous reports, is especially urgent at the present time, when the cost of maintaining an efficient force and the prices of office supplies are unusually high.

For the year 1918 the Commission therefore asks for an appropriation of \$29,688, which will enable it to make adequate provision for the enforcement of those decrees already effective, and such others as may go into operation in the coming year; to support the work of the wage boards now in session, and new boards likely to be established within the next few months; to complete the comprehensive study of

the wages of women in the cotton textile industry commenced in June, 1917; to investigate the wages paid in one or more new occupations; and to meet proportionate necessary increases in the running expenses of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

EDWIN N. BARTLETT, *Chairman.*

MABEL GILLESPIE.

ARTHUR N. HOLCOMBE.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

*To the Minimum Wage Commission.*

I herewith submit the following tabular statement showing the number of establishments inspected and the number of workers for whom wage records were secured in the investigations conducted by the Commission during 1917, together with a summary of the expenditure of the appropriation granted by the General Court for that year.

### INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY THE MINIMUM WAGE COMMISSION IN 1917.

*Investigations made under Section 3 of the Minimum Wage Law.*

INDUSTRY.	NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS INVESTIGATED.			NUMBER OF WOMEN FOR WHOM WAGE RECORDS WERE OBTAINED.		
	Wage Records available.	Wage Records Lacking or inadequate.	Total.	Records Tabulated.	Records excluded from Tabulation.	Total.
Millinery trades: —						
Hats (factory made), . . .	8	3	11	938	145	1,083
Feathers and flowers, . . .	2	1	3	182	83	265
Wholesale millinery, . . .	10	2	12	393	181	574
Retail millinery, . . .	28	136	164	351	131	482
Office and other building cleaning,	64	137	201	1,249	514	1,763
Cotton goods, . . .	78	2	80	-1	-1	52,600 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total, . . .</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>56,767<sup>2</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Tabulation not completed.

<sup>2</sup> Approximate figure, including 8,169 for whom one week's record only has been obtained.

*Investigations made under Section 14 of the Minimum Wage Law.*

INDUSTRY.	Number of Establishments investigated.	Number of Women for whom Wage Records were obtained.
Brush, . . . . .	23	871
Retail stores, . . . . .	55	- <sup>1</sup>
Women's clothing, . . . . .	400 <sup>2</sup>	3,874
<b>Total, . . . . .</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>-<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Wage records obtained in some stores were for all women employed, in others only for those receiving under \$8.50, therefore a total is not given.

<sup>2</sup> The pay rolls of 134 of these establishments were inspected twice in 1917.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

## Appropriations:—

Salaries and expenses of commissioners, . . . . .	\$2,300 00	
Salary of the secretary, . . . . .	2,000 00	
Clerical assistance, . . . . .	3,500 00	
Salaries of special agents, . . . . .	4,000 00	
Additional appropriation for salaries of investigators, in accordance with chapter 323, General Acts of 1917, . . . . .	83 30	
Compensation and expenses of wage boards, . . . . .	2,000 00	
Office rent, . . . . .	1,600 00	
Traveling and contingent expenses, . . . . .	2,600 00	
Additional appropriation for traveling and contingent expenses, transferred from fund of extraordinary expenses, . . . . .	128 83	
		<b>\$18,212 13</b>

## Expenditures:—

Salaries and expenses of commissioners, . . . . .	\$1,562 73
Salary of the secretary, . . . . .	2,000 00
Clerical assistance, . . . . .	3,499 37
Salaries of special agents, . . . . .	4,081 72
Compensation and expenses of wage boards, . . . . .	1,462 13
Office rent, . . . . .	1,599 96

*Amount carried forward, . . . . .* \$14,205 91

*Amount brought forward,* . . . . \$14,205 91

**Traveling and contingent expenses: —**

Light, . . . . .	\$29 35	
Traveling expenses, . . . . .	660 73	
Telephone and telegraph, . . . . .	246 60	
Express and messenger, . . . . .	30 74	
Stationery and office supplies, . . . . .	166 85	
Printing, . . . . .	1,280 06	
Postage, . . . . .	108 52	
Books, periodicals, clippings, . . . . .	92 97	
Advertising, . . . . .	20 88	
National Child Welfare Exhibit Association, . . . . .	56 12	
Miscellaneous, . . . . .	36 01	
		<hr/>
		2,728 83
		<hr/>
		\$16,934 74

Unexpended balance reverting  
to State treasury: —

Salaries and expenses of com- missioners, . . . . .	\$737 27	
Clerical assistance, . . . . .	63	
Salaries of special agents, . . . . .	1 58	
Compensation and expenses of wage boards, . . . . .	537 87	
Office rent, . . . . .	04	
		<hr/>
		1,277 39
		<hr/>
		\$18,212 13

Yours respectfully,

ELLEN NATHALIE MATTHEWS,

*Secretary.*





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## APPENDICES.

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## APPENDIX No. 1.

## MINIMUM WAGE DECREES ESTABLISHED IN MASSACHUSETTS UP TO JAN. 1, 1918.

KINDS OF WORK COVERED.	WORKERS AFFECTED.		Wage Rates.	Remarks.	Decree Effective.
	Class.	Age.			
Brush industry.	Experienced time workers.	Any.	\$0.155 an hour.	Piece rates also to yield at least \$0.155 an hour.	Aug. 15, 1914.
	Learners and apprentices—time workers.		65 per cent. of above (about \$0.10).	Time of apprenticeship not more than 1 year.	
Laundry.	Experienced females of ordinary ability.	Any.	\$3 weekly.	To be deemed "experienced" after 1 year's apprenticeship if absences during that period have not been of unreasonable duration. For females of less than ordinary ability wage fixed by special license.	Sept. 1, 1915.
	Learners and apprentices: (1) Under 3 months' experience. (2) 3-6 months' experience. (3) 6-9 months' experience. (4) 9-12 months' experience.		(1) \$3 weekly. (2) \$3.50 weekly. (3) \$7 weekly. (4) \$7.50 weekly.		
Retail stores.	Experienced females of ordinary ability.	19 or over.	\$3.50 weekly.	As above. Extra or part time workers to receive at least same scale of pay pro rata for time actually employed.	Jan. 1, 1916.
	Learners and apprentices.	(1) 18 or over. (2) 17. (3) Less than 17.	(1) \$7 weekly. (2) \$6 weekly. (3) \$5 weekly.		

Women's clothing factories (cloak, suit, skirt, dress and waist-shops).	Experienced females of ordinary ability.	19½ or over.	\$8.75 weekly.	To be deemed "experienced" after 1½ years' apprenticeship after reaching 18 if absences during that period have not been of unusual duration. For females of less than ordinary ability wage fixed by special license.	Feb. 1, 1917.
	Learners and apprentices.	(1) 18 or over. (2) Less than 18.	(1) \$7 weekly. (2) \$6 weekly.		
Men's clothing and raincoat factories.	Experienced females of ordinary ability.	18 or over.	\$9 weekly.	To be deemed "experienced" after 1 year's apprenticeship if absences during that period have not been of unreasonable duration. For females of less than ordinary ability wage fixed by special license.	Jan. 1, 1918.
	Learners and apprentices: (1) 3-12 months' experience.	Any.	\$7 weekly.		
Men's furnishings factories (manufacture of men's and boys' shirts, overalls, and other workmen's garments, men's neckwear and other furnishings, and men's, women's and children's garters and suspenders).	Experienced females of ordinary ability.	Any.	\$9 weekly.	To be deemed "experienced" after 52 weeks' apprenticeship. For the purpose of computing weeks of experience a week's work shall consist of not less than thirty-six hours. For females of less than ordinary ability wage fixed by special license.	Feb. 1, 1918.
	Learners and apprentices: (1) 26-52 weeks' experience. (2) 6-26 weeks' experience.		(1) \$8 weekly. (2) \$7 weekly.		

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